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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND AFERNANDEZ,  
IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Peace Process, Lebanon, Iraq,  
Palestinian Territories (10/31)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers reported President Asad's meeting with a delegation of the Foreign Journalists Association in which he underscored the role of media and journalists in conveying facts and enhancing communication among civilizations. President Asad answered questions about the peace process in the region, the importance of the roles of Europe and America in establishing a just and comprehensive peace, Syrian-European relations, Syria's stances vis--vis current developments in the region, Syrian and Arab relations with Latin American countries and ongoing modernization and reforms in Syria in all fields.

Papers also reported the graduation ceremony of a new class of air force cadets at which Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Ali Habib delivered a speech confirming Syria's readiness to confront any aggression and that it will not be intimidated by threats. Habib praised the Lebanese resistance's confrontation of the recent Israeli aggression against Lebanon. He reiterated that Syria would always stand by the international community to establish peace and stability in the region by implementing legitimate international resolutions.

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"Under president Asad's patronage, a new class of air force cadets graduates. Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Habib: Threats and pressure against Syria will not intimidate or divert it from its firm stances and principles" (Government-owned Tishreen, 10/31)

"President Asad underscores the important role of media and journalists in conveying facts and enhancing communication among civilizations. President Asad emphasizes the important role of Europe and America in the peace process" (Government-owned Tishreen, 10/31)

"Syria's Information Minister Dr. Mohsen Bilal and former Russian Premier Primakov review reactivation of media cooperation between Syria and Russia" (Government-owned Tishreen, 10/31)

"British expert Williams confirms that Israel used depleted uranium in its latest aggression against Lebanon. Lebanese call for a new government and warn against conspiratorial positions by the March 14 group" (Government-owned Tishreen, 10/31)

"A US diplomat is involved in smuggling arms into Lebanon" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 10/31)

"While Haaretz calls for returning the Golan to Syria, US daily

'Washington Post': Israel is working hard to double the number of settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan" (Government-owned Tishreen, 10/31)

"The International Parliamentary Federation calls on Israel to release HAMAS MPs. Omert threatens to wage a massive assault in the West Bank. Hahieh calls on the international community to stop Israeli attack" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 10/31)

"One Palestinian martyred and two wounded in Beit Hanon" (Government-owned Tishreen, 10/31)

"A US security delegation suddenly in Baghdad. Various explosions claim the lives of scores of Iraqis. Zebari supports extension for US troops in Iraq" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 10/31)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"Alicante Declaration"  
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Muhammad Khayr al-Jammali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (10/31): "Peace in the Middle East is not only a regional need but also an international need. This is why the foreign ministers of 11 Mediterranean countries issued a declaration in the Spanish city of Alicante calling for the launch of a new and credible Middle East peace process....

"The current peace process has failed despite efforts and negotiations that lasted for 10 years, during which the Arab position, particularly the Syrian position, was characterized by seriousness, firm commitment to the principles and international terms of reference of peace, and positive cooperation with every international effort that sought to guarantee the success and survival of the peace process. The Israeli and American positions, on the other hand, were characterized by intransigence regarding the peace requirements, and Israel used the peace process to waste time, believing that Arabs adopted peace as the only strategic option and dropped all other options....

"The previous peace process failed because Israel, supported by the

United States, refused to comply with the requirements of peace, namely, withdrawing its forces to the June 4, 1967, border and recognizing the full legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. In order for the Alicante initiative not to meet the same failure and for the region not to witness further tension, chaos, and unrest endangering world peace, it is necessary to make Israel and those who take its side for personal reasons or strategic interests understand that policies of force, occupation, pressure, and threats will result in many disasters that will affect not only the countries that are targeted by these policies, but also, and mainly, the parties that adopt these policies. The alternative, therefore, is a credible peace process proceeding from a serious Israeli desire for peace and a sincere American commitment to it and a positive, unbiased role leading the process to its desired end."

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"'The Tripartite Attack,' and Continued Colonialist Course"  
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Dr. Khalaf al-Jarrad, Chief Editor of government-owned Tishrin, commented (10/31): "The Tripartite Attack against Egypt in 1956, was not the first or the last in the wave of colonialist invasions.... The Arab world is currently witnessing fierce Western colonialist campaigns.... Pretexts and objectives have always been the same.

"Those who have a chance to thoroughly examine recently released archive documents, memoranda, and correspondence on the old colonialist plans in the Arab region will find similarity, proximity, and indeed conformity between these objectives and known tactics of colonialist forces in past centuries and what their major heir (the United States) is declaring and doing today: invasion, occupation, threats, political and diplomatic games, blackmail, provocation, and attempts to divide Arabs by bringing some of them closer and driving others away. This is in addition to creating sedition, doubts, and obsessions among them through carefully thought-out media leaks, hints, suggestions, doublespeak, lies, psychological mobilization, personalization of issues, and inflation of differences. The aim is to ignite the fire of Arab-Arab disputes and maintain the climate of tension so that the US Administration alone will remain the dominant power in continuation of the inherited colonialist traditions."

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"Deliberate Criminality"  
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Umar Jaftali, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (10/31): "A British press report revealed that Israel used uranium-based ammunition in its recent war against Lebanon.... Israel persists in inflicting long-term harm on the Lebanese.... "Israel was not content with immersing Lebanese territory in the blood of innocent people and with fully destroying Lebanon's infrastructure from north to south. It left gifts for the Lebanese: uranium, cluster bombs, mines, and phosphoric bombs that killed a number of Lebanese. It refuses to give the maps of these deadly bombs to UNIFIL, and it continues to challenge Resolution 1701 and Lebanese sovereignty.... "We regret that no one in the international community is speaking up, demanding that Israel be held to account and punished for its proven crimes against Lebanon and the Lebanese...." Corbin